

Lawmakers Called for Step to be Taken in November 2007

Washington, DC—U.S. Congresswoman Nita Lowey (NY-18) and U.S. Congressman Steve Israel (NY-02) today applauded the appointment of Marie Kennington-Gardiner as the director of the New York Integration Office of the U.S. Department of Transportation. Last year, Lowey and Israel led a letter of 32 Members of Congress to Transportation Secretary Peters suggesting that she appoint an aviation “czar” to implement solutions to airspace congestion facing the New York-New Jersey region.

“Flight delays and cancellations at airports in the New York Metro area are more severe than ever,” said Lowey. “Appointing an experienced individual and empowering that person to evaluate congestion at all stages of flight and take remedial actions is a step toward alleviating the problems that business and personal travelers are facing. I am pleased that the Administration has accepted our recommendation.”

"Delays at New York airports impact our economy, our productivity and our sanity," said Congressman Israel. "I was reminded of this earlier this week when I sat on an already delayed flight to Washington and was informed that we were '18th in line for take-off.' Everyone agrees that congestion in New York's airspace is a problem that's getting worse, but there needs to be a single individual that can evaluate all of the proposed solutions and be held accountable for a comprehensive solution to this problem. I'm grateful that the Administration has acted upon our request to create a New York airport 'czar' and I look forward to working on permanent solutions to congestion in our airspace."

Lowey, Israel, and other Members of Congress from the New York Metropolitan Area originally called on the Administration to appoint an aviation czar in November 2007. In a letter to Secretary Peters, the bipartisan and bicameral group of 32 Members of Congress expressed concerns about a “congestion pricing” plan for New York airports and urged the appointment of an airspace czar to evaluate congestion at every step of the flight process – from tower control, to the TRACON, to the routing center. This model was used successfully to solve South Florida’s airspace challenges in 2005.